

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing Of Claims:

1.-18. (Canceled)

19. (New). A method for operating a drive unit of a vehicle, comprising:

- setting, in an overrun condition of the drive unit, an output variable of the drive unit according to a preset driving strategy;

- specifying at least two preset driving strategies for the overrun condition of the drive unit;

- selecting, in the overrun condition, one of the specified driving strategies as a function of a driving situation;

- setting the output variable by at least one actuating variable of the drive unit;

- setting the at least one actuating variable as a function of the selected driving strategy; and

- selecting at least one of an ignition angle and a gear ratio as the at least one actuating variable.

20. (New) The method as recited in Claim 19, further comprising:

- in response to a presence of a first driving situation, selecting a first driving strategy, in which at least one of:

- the ignition angle is reset in a late direction, and

- the gear ratio is reduced; and

- in response to a presence of a second driving situation, selecting a second driving strategy, in which at least one of:

- the ignition angle is reset in an early direction, and

- the gear ratio is increased.

21. (New) The method as recited in Claim 19, further comprising:
- ascertaining the driving situation by evaluating one of a first gradient of a variable derived from an operation of an operating element and a second gradient of a variable derived from a specification for the output variable of the drive unit;
 - detecting the first driving situation if one of the first gradient and the second gradient falls below a prespecified threshold value; and
 - detecting the second driving situation if one of the first gradient and the second gradient exceeds the prespecified threshold value.
22. (New) The method as recited in Claim 21, further comprising:
- ascertaining at least one of the ignition angle that is to be set and the gear ratio that is to be set as a function of one of the first gradient and the second gradient, using in each case one of a characteristics curve and a characteristics map.
23. (New) The method as recited in Claim 19, further comprising:
- ascertaining the driving situation by evaluating an operation of a brake pedal; and
 - detecting a first driving situation if the brake pedal is depressed; and
 - detecting a second driving situation if the brake pedal is released.
24. (New) The method as recited in Claim 19, further comprising:
- ascertaining the driving situation by evaluating information regarding an inclination of the vehicle with respect to a horizontal;
 - detecting a first driving situation in response to an exceeding in absolute value of a prespecified threshold value by the inclination; and
 - detecting a second driving situation in response to a falling below in absolute value of the prespecified threshold value by the inclination.
25. (New) The method as recited in Claim 19, further comprising:
- ascertaining the driving situation by evaluating one of a travel speed, a preceding vehicle, and a detected obstacle on one of a roadway and a traffic routing.
26. (New) The method as recited in Claim 19, further comprising:
- detecting a first driving situation if a ratio of an engine speed to a vehicle speed exceeds a prespecified threshold value; and
 - detecting a second driving situation if the ratio does not exceed the prespecified threshold value.

27. (New) The method as recited in Claim 19, further comprising:
detecting a first driving situation if at least one of:
a distance from a preceding vehicle falls below a prespecified threshold value,
an approach speed to the preceding vehicle exceeds a prespecified threshold value,
an obstacle on a roadway is detected, and
an approach of the vehicle to one of a curve, a crossing, and a junction is detected; and
detecting a second driving situation if at least one of:
a distance from a preceding vehicle exceeds a prespecified threshold value,
an approach speed to the preceding vehicle falls below a prespecified threshold value,
an obstacle on a roadway is not detected, and
an approach of the vehicle to one of a curve, a crossing, and a junction is not detected.
28. (New) The method as recited in Claim 19, further comprising:
detecting a first driving situation if a transmission downshifting is detected within a predefined time; and
detecting a second driving situation if the transmission downshifting is not detected within the predefined time.
29. (New) The method as recited in Claim 19, further comprising:
detecting a first driving situation if, in the case of an automatic transmission, a position of one of a selector lever and an operating element corresponding thereto is in a different setting than one of “drive” and “D”; and
detecting a second driving situation if, in the case of the automatic transmission, the position of one of the selector lever and the operating element corresponding thereto is in a setting associated with one of “drive” and “D.”

30. (New) The method as recited in Claim 19, further comprising:
in response to a detection of a fault in a safety-relevant component of one of the vehicle and the drive unit, at least one of:
reducing an air supply,
shifting the ignition angle in a late direction,
reducing a fuel supply, and
reducing the gear ratio.
31. (New) The method as recited in Claim 19, wherein:
in the presence of a first driving situation, a first prespecified threshold value for an operating variable of the drive unit, corresponding to an engine speed, above which a fuel supply is completely interrupted, is at a lower value than in a presence of a second driving situation.
32. (New) The method as recited in Claim 19, wherein:
in the presence of a first driving situation, a second prespecified threshold value for an operating variable of the drive unit, corresponding to an engine speed, below which a fuel supply is resumed again after a previous interruption, is at a lower value than in a presence of the second driving situation.
33. (New) The method as recited in Claim 19, further comprising:
ascertaining a probability for a presence of one of a first driving situation and a second driving situation from which condition is, or which conditions are present for the detection of the corresponding driving situation; and
detecting one of the first driving situation and the second driving situation only if a corresponding probability of their being present exceeds a prespecified threshold value.
34. (New) The method as recited in Claim 19, further comprising:
specifying a minimum value for the output variable in a selection of a first driving strategy.
35. (New) The method as recited in Claim 19, further comprising:
reducing the output variable of the drive unit by a first driving strategy; and
one of maintaining and increasing the output variable of the drive unit by a second driving strategy.

36. (New) A device for operating a drive unit of a vehicle, comprising:
- a first setting arrangement for setting an output variable of the drive unit in an overrun condition of the drive unit according to a preset driving strategy;
 - a specification arrangement for specifying at least two preset driving strategies for the overrun condition of the drive unit;
 - a selection arrangement for, in the overrun condition, selecting one of the specified driving strategies as a function of a driving situation; and
 - a second setting arrangement for setting the output variable by at least one actuating variable of the drive unit and for setting the at least one actuating variable as a function of the selected driving strategy, wherein the least one actuating variable includes at least one of an ignition angle and a gear ratio.